

ABSTRACT OF INVENTION

An automatically-activated wireless code symbol reading system comprising a hand-supportable housing having a manually-activatable data transmission switch under automatic communication range dependent control. When a bar code symbol is read, the bar code reader is located inside the predetermined RF data communication range of the system, then the symbol character data string, produced at substantially the same time as the manual activation of the data transmission switch, is transmitted to the base station over the wireless RF communication link. If the device is outside the range, then an audible and/or visual indication is automatically generated, and the packaged symbol character data string is packaged and transmitted to a data storage buffer aboard the bar code reader. Then when the bar code symbol reader is moved within the communication range of the system, the buffered/packaged symbol character data is automatically transmitted to the base station by the RF-based data communication link.